Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A device comprising:

a body having:

a first portion defining a tapered hole configured for guiding a member into a tube coupled to the body,

a second portion defining a bore for receiving the tube for passage of the member into the tube from the tapered hole, and

a ~~circumferential~~ projecting surface encircling the bore, the projecting surface being formed on an internal surface of the body at an intersection between the tapered hole and the bore and configured to restrict the tube from passing from the second portion into the first portion,

the body defining a slot communicating with the hole and the bore for separating the body and the member while the member remains in the tube, the slot extending along the entire length of the body.

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 1 wherein the bore has a constant diameter.

4. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 1 wherein the bore is tapered.

5. (Cancelled)

6. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 1 wherein the slot extends from the tapered hole and the bore to an external surface of the body.

7. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 1 further comprising the member and wherein the member comprises a suture thread.

8. (Original) The device of claim 1 further comprising a handle extending from the body.

9. (Currently Amended) A device comprising:

a tube defining a hole through a lateral surface of the tube; and

a body having:

a first portion defining a tapered hole configured for guiding a member into the tube coupled to the body,

a second portion defining a bore for receiving the tube for passage of the member into the tube from the tapered hole, and

a projecting surface formed on an internal surface of the body at an intersection between the tapered hole and the bore and configured to restrict the tube from passing from the second portion into the first portion,

the body defining a slot communicating with the hole and the bore for separating the body and the member while the member remains in the tube, the slot extending from the tapered hole and the bore to an external surface of the body.

10. (Original) The device of claim 9 wherein the body is configured for connection to an end of the tube.

11. (Cancelled)

12. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 9 wherein the bore has a constant diameter.

13. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 9 wherein the bore is tapered.

14. (Cancelled)

15. (Cancelled)

16. (Original) The device of claim 9 wherein the tube defines an opening for receiving the member.

17. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 16 wherein a width of the opening is substantially the same as the width of the narrowest portion of the tapered hole.

18. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 9 further comprising the member and wherein the member comprises a suture thread.

19. (Original) The device of claim 9 further comprising a handle extending from the body.

20. (Previously Presented) A method comprising:

coupling a body to an end of a tube, the body defining a tapered hole and a slot;

introducing an end of a member into the body through a larger opening of the tapered hole;

after the end of the member is introduced into the body through the larger opening of the tapered hole, guiding the member into the tube through the tapered hole, the tapered hole acting

to guide the member when advanced into the tube from the larger opening of the tapered hole to a smaller opening of the tapered hole; and

separating the body and the member by passing the member through the slot.

21. (Original) The method of claim 20 wherein coupling comprises receiving the end of the tube in a bore in the body, the bore communicating with the tapered hole.

22. (Cancelled)

23. (Cancelled)

24. (Previously presented) The device of claim 1, wherein the body is configured such that the tapered hole guides the member when advanced into the tube from a larger opening of the tapered hole to a smaller opening of the tapered hole.

25. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 9, wherein the slot extends from a terminal end of the first portion to a terminal end of the second portion.

26. (Previously presented) The device of claim 9, wherein the body is configured such that the tapered hole guides the member when advanced into the tube from a larger opening of the tapered hole to a smaller opening of the tapered hole.

27. (Previously presented) The method of claim 20, wherein separating the body and the member by passing the member through the slot comprises separating the body and the member by passing the member through the slot while the member remains in the tube.

28. (Previously presented) The method of claim 20, further comprising decoupling the body from the end of the tube.

29. (Currently Amended) A device comprising:

a body having:

a first terminal end portion defining a tapered hole, and

a second terminal end portion opposite to the first terminal end portion, the second terminal end portion defining a bore in communication with the tapered hole,

a projecting surface formed on an internal surface of the body at an intersection between the bore and the tapered hole,,

the body defining a slot extending from the tapered hole and the bore to an external surface of the body and extending from the first terminal end portion to the second terminal end portion; and

a cylindrical handle integrally attached~~connected~~ to the body and projecting on only one side of the body opposite to the slot.

30. (Currently Amended) A device comprising:

a body having:

a first portion defining a tapered hole configured for guiding a member into a tube coupled to the body,

a second portion defining a bore for passage of the member therethrough from the tapered hole, the bore having a diameter that is greater than a width of the narrowest portion of the tapered hole, and

a ~~circumferential~~ projecting surface encircling the bore, the projecting surface being formed at an intersection between the first portion and the second portion,

the body defining a slot communicating with the hole and the bore for separating the body and the member while the member remains in the tube.

31. (Currently Amended) A device comprising:

a body having:

a first portion defining a tapered hole configured for guiding a member into a tube coupled to the body,

a second portion defining a bore for passage of the member therethrough from the tapered hole, the tapered hole and the bore being in communication with each other such that a channel is formed that extends from the first portion to the second portion; and

a ~~circumferential~~ projecting surface encircling the bore, the projecting surface being formed on an internal surface of the body at an intersection between the tapered hole and the bore, the projecting surface projecting from the internal surface of the body to constrict a width of the channel to being less than a width of the bore at the intersection between the tapered hole and the bore,

the body defining a slot communicating with the hole and the bore for separating the body and the member while the member remains in the tube, the slot extending to an end of the body such that the slot is open at the end.

32. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 9, wherein the projecting surface is a circumferential projecting surface.

33. (New) The device of claim 1, wherein the projecting surface defines a circular opening.

34. (New) The device of claim 33, wherein the circular opening has a diameter smaller than the smallest diameter of the bore.

35. (New) The device of claim 9, wherein the tube defines a channel that is curved along a longitudinal extent of the channel.